

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL UR US

SUBJECT: VISIT BY US BUSINESSMEN TO MOSCOW TO PURCHASE MODERN
SOVIET ART

REF: STATE 224046

1. JOHN MOORE, PRESIDENT OF MULTI COMMUNICATIONS, S.A., DEPARTED MOSCOW OCTOBER 6 WITH AN AGREEMENT TO IMPORT SOVIET ART FOR EXHIBIT AND SALE AT TEN MAJOR US DEPARTMENT STORES DURING 1976 APPARENTLY WELL IN HAND. THE FIRST SHOW WOULD OPEN IN WASHINGTON'S WOODWARD & LOTHROP IN JANUARY, WITH WANAMAKER'S IN PHILADELPHIA NEXT AND ATLANTA'S RICH'S AND DALLAS'S NIEMAN & MARCUS WAITING IN LINE. MOORE WAS ACCOMPANIED IN MOSCOW BY NORMAN J. ADISE, DIRECTOR OF MULTI COMMUNICATIONS, AND MISS JANE GRAPES, W&L'S ART BUYER.

2. MOORE'S DISCUSSIONS WERE WITH NOVOEXPORT AND WITH A.G. KHALTURIN, HEAD OF THE FINE ARTS DIVISION OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE. MOORE AND HIS COLLEAGUES VISITED BOTH THE OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL ART EXHIBITS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC DURING THEIR VISIT. THEY WERE IN TOUCH WITH UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS, PURSUING THE POSSIBILITY OF INCLUDING THEIR WORKS IN THE SHIPMENTS PROMISED BY NOVAEXPORT. MOORE KEPT THE EMBASSY GENERALLY INFORMED OF HIS PROGRESS AND GROWING BEMUSEMENT AND OCCASIONAL
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IRRITATION AT THE SOVIET WAY OF DOING BUSINESS.

3. FOR ONE, HE WAS APPALLED TO FIND THAT THE AGREEMENT SIGNED IN THE USA GIVING HIS COMPANY EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS TO HANDLE SOVIET ART IN THE STATES WAS DUPLICATED BY ANOTHER SIMILAR AGREEMENT WITH A SMALL NYC GALLERY, WHOSE BUYER WAS IN MOSCOW AT THE SAME TIME. THE SOVIET ARGUMENT THAT MOORE'S FIRM HAD EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS FOR DEPARTMENT STORES EXHIBITS AND SALES WHEREAS THE GALLERY WOULD ONLY HANDLE REQUESTS FROM OTHER US GALLERIES REPORTEDLY CAUSED MOORE TO LOSE HIS TEMPER -- BUT THE TWO COMPETING EXCLUSIVE AGREEMENTS STAND; AND MOORE IS PROCEEDING WITH HIS PLANS.

4. THEN, MOORE'S PROPOSAL TO INCLUDE IN NOVOEXPORT'S SHIPMENT REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLE OF THE UNOFFICIAL ART HE HAD SEEN WAS RECEIVED UNENTHUSIASTICALLY AT THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE, HOWEVER MUCH EXCITEMENT IT GENERATED AMONG THE UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS AWARE OF MOORE'S EFFORT. MOORE HAD SUGGESTED IN WRITING TO THE MINCULT THAT HE WOULD MERELY PROVIDE NAMES AND THE QUANTITY DESIRED, LEAVING THE ORFINAL SELECTION TO THE SOVIETS. MOORE TELLS OF HIS LAST INTERVIEW WITH KHALTURIN: "SO, MR. MOORE, YOU WOULD TAKE 300 WORKS FROM 15,000 (OFFICIAL) ARTISTS AND WANT 50 FROM 130 (UNOFFICIALS)? WELL, WE'LL SEE." MOORE DID NOT SAY THAT THE PROJECT DEPENDED ON THE INCLUSION OF UNOFFICIAL ART. AND IN MISS GRAPES'S VIEW, WOODY'S SHOULD CARRY ON WITH ITS PLANS EVEN IF ONLY OFFICIAL ART WERE REPRESENTED.

5. MOORE ESTIMATES THE PROJECT TO BE EXTREMELY PROFITABLE. EACH OF THE TEN DEPARTMENT STORES LINED UP FOR 1976 WOULD SHOW AT LEAST 300 PAINTING. NOVOEXPORT CHARGES AN AVERAGE OF \$300, AND THE WORKS WOULD SELL FOR ABOUT \$1,000 IN THE USA. MODERN CERAMICS, JEWELRY, TAPESTRIES AND CHINA MAY ALSO BE INCLUDED, AS MOORE AND GRAPES WERE IMPRESSED BY THESE ITEMS IN THE OFFICIAL ART SHOW NOW OPEN AT THE MANEGE.

6. MOORE ENVISAGES SIMILAR EXHIBITS IN LATIN AMERICA, AS NOTED IN THE REFTEL. BUT HE WILL CONCENTRATE ON THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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USA FIRST. ON DEPARTURE HE WAS CONCERNED THAT THE SOVIET OFFICIAL ART MACHINE WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY PRODUCING SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES OF ADEQUATE QUALITY TO SATISFY WHAT HE CLEARLY FORESEES AS A HUGE AND LUCRATIVE MARKET AT CURRENT MARGINS.

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